

I saw Mrs. Frisby at the Class Reunion ceremonies this past May, 2014. It was her 70th year if I remember correctly.

I am not sure where her remembrances of Fairbury were published originally, but a copy is in the Fairbury history folder in the Pontiac library:

I Remember.....

By Cathryn Frisby

MARJORIE FULTON was a naturalist. Her flowers were the best! She composted long before environmentalists were throwing the term around. She shared her love of nature freely. The Girl Scouts loved her. They gave her the Indian name, "Neechi". She was very proud of her home, located west of Duffy's, had been moved here from Avoca.

HATTIE SWARM was a teacher at Edison School for years. Her father owned a grocery store on Livingston Street which Ned and Lillie Wagner owned in later years. Hattie's father did a little "bootlegging" on the side and stored his bottles under the store. If a customer asked for some, he would tell them to come back tomorrow. That night he would crawl under the store to retrieve a bottle. Hattie chuckled about it and said she guessed he never got caught. She wondered if some of the bottles were still there.

WALTON'S EMPORIUM -Showplace Palace was, to my young eyes, a vision of beauty and greatness! I doubt if, a few years later, Marshall Fields commandeered as much attention from me.

As a child I loved to stand and look up at the beautiful displays in the windows that are now glass blocks on the second floor. Beautifully clad mannequins, children and babies got a great deal of attention. Then to get to enter the store and be given the choice of going up that gorgeous staircase or down another beautiful stairs to the basement wonderland was a difficult decision. Men's working clothes, hardware, pots and pans, and general merchandise filled the lower level.

Upstairs I remember smaller shops linens, silver, hats, baby items, and beautiful plush carpeting. The silverware carried the "Walton Brothers" monogram on the backs. The hats, with satins, plumes, and feathers, were gorgeous.

At that time dining areas were covered with linen tablecloths that were a chore to launder and iron. The linen cloth and cotton damask, too, were sold by the yard in the yard goods department. The linen shop carried the finished items ready for use. Walton's was a department store with a complete line of groceries. Many home orders were filled and delivered daily. Without refrigeration, housewives relied on their ice-boxes and Munz's Ice Delivery Service. The grocery was complete even to barrels of mineral oil, vinegar, and kerosene.

Across the street to the south farm machinery was sold. For, years, there was a new farm wagon displayed behind a large glass window on the second floor. A freight elevator at the back of the store had been used to move the wagon to this floor.

Walton's Department Store supplied the entire area with all the goods and services that were needed.

THE AMERICAN LEGION -After World War I, the returned veterans banded together to form the American Legion Post. They named it the John Joda Post for the first Fairburian killed in service. John also had a sister who was an army nurse.

After a few years, the Post obtained the legion rooms that today are the west part of Benchwarmer's. Both floors were in constant use. The men met regularly and were there for every veteran - some of the Civil War Vets needed a helping hand. The World War I Vets were always there when a community need arose. They helped dig the basement to the hospital and even purchased the Fairbury Fair when it went into bankruptcy. Because of them there is a Fairbury Fair today!

A memorial stone can be found in Graceland Cemetery listing the fatalities from the Fairbury area. Recently a plaque was returned to City Park listing the veterans who returned from battle. Probably no other group of men in this area have banded together for brotherhood and lived up to their preamble to defend God and country and their fellow man.

GOOD NEWS. A NEW HOSPITAL FOR FAIRBURY IS REALIZED - The whole community for miles around was in agreement a new hospital was needed. Lodges, groups, clubs, and individuals donated or pledged heavily.

Farmers took tractors, teams of horses, wagons and shovels and went to Fairbury to help the hospital board dig a basement for the new hospital. Soon the building was complete. I was asked to help as a hostess for the open house. A crowd came eager to look and look they did. The people were excited, enthusiastic and very happy.

Local doctors and nurses gave their best. Those at Fairbury Hospital saved many lives, treated accident victims, and delivered babies. Today the hospital still stands as a reminder of love and cooperation. It seems to be saying "Rescue Me"! Fairbury residents must now travel a distance for medical and nursing care.

1930's BAND CONCERTS AND FREE MOVIES — held in Central Park were well attended. The Fairbury merchants covered the expenses. In the afternoon city workers would arrive with a truck-load of planks and field tiles and soon there were seats for all. Many chose to set out blankets on the ground. Local residents parked their cars earlier in the day and returned to enjoy that comfort. Ladies and children walked around and around the water fountain and sometimes got a little wet. Older children vied for the chance to sit on the cannons. Band concerts were held on a Tuesday or Thursday evening and free movies were a Saturday night attraction.

DECKER'S CAFE — located on the east end of Fairbury along Route 24 across from Graceland Cemetery was a great restaurant. The food, including homemade pies, was excellent! There was a small room with booths to one side and the young folks gathered here in the evenings after the movies. There was a jukebox and a small dance floor. Fried ham sandwiches were much more popular than hamburgers. It was on this dance floor that Bill Freed demonstrated and perfected his famous "Barnyard Shuffle" dance step!

RAYMOND GRODER'S GARAGE — hired Bill Frisby as a bookkeeper and receptionist in 1937. The garage was located where Steidinger Tires shop is now. This was at the time of the introduction of the Allis Chalmers tractor in this area. Groder would demonstrate the tractor. If interested, Groder would take the farmer's horses for trade or down payment.

One farmer came in repeatedly and asked a myriad of questions. He wanted to hear the tractor run and see a demonstration. This went on for a couple of months. He even had Groder come to his farm and place a value on his horses. Still no deal.

Finally one Saturday he arrived at the garage and informed Groder he had decided tractors were a "passing fancy" and would never replace horse farming!

DR. JOHN TOWNSEND — I remember sitting in the amphitheater at the fairgrounds on a very hot day in the 1930's and listening to Dr. Townsend explain his ideas for some form of social security for older members of our society. Dr. Townsend's family home was east of Fairbury near the Forrest curve. Now I am one of those people receiving the Social Security he proposed!

Jeremy Walter has researched Dr. Townsend and the information is on display at City Hall. He was a Fairbury resident and a very interesting man.

FUN HAVEN — In the 1940's, before there was a Boys and Girls Club, Fairbury had a place for young people to go and have fun. A group of ministers, parents, and interested citizens formed a group to promote activities for teenagers. They secured the Modern Woodman Hotel located on the south side of Locust Street where there are law offices now. The large hall was upstairs where apartments are now located. Decorating was done. Paul Eilers painted murals on the walls and booths were placed around the outside. A jukebox and soft drinks were available. There were tables for games, and students who wanted to study together had the chance. There was a ticket booth at the foot of the stairs and an adult would be there to check a student in and out. Volunteers took turns being in attendance at all times. It was a great place for teens to go and have fun together.

These are random thoughts in haste. Don't forget Ralph Romig wrote and published a book of poetry; Judy Ann Bean Sutherland wrote children's books using Fairbury as a background; and Kenney Headley's book is a treasure. The Stackpole name is worth research, and Alma Lewis James wrote Stuffed Clubs and Antimacassars.